

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**July 8, 2004**

**Members Present:** Jean Haggerty, Chair; Hank Peirce; Doris Holden; Elsie Fetterman.

**Absent:** Al Byam; Susan Whitbourne; Frank Lattuca; Joan Keochakian

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano, Interim Director/Program Director; Maura Plante, Program Director/Services; Barry DelCastilho, Town Manager; Robie Hubley, Select Board Member.

**Community Members:** Burt Finger; Rosemary Kofler; Marge Babb; Tom Marshall.

Meeting called to order at 9:11AM.

A quorum was not present, but the meeting was held with no votes to be taken on any matters.

Minutes of June meeting read, but not approved due to no quorum. Elsie identified under Wellness Comm. the last sentence, "...to put off till Fall approval of..." in relation to the Nursing Center and indicated the COA needs to follow that as there was an item on this month's agenda concerning the Nursing Center. Jean indicated no votes could be taken today as there wasn't a quorum present.

**Election of Officers:** Not today due to a quorum not being present. Additionally, Jean pointed out the following: 1) does the COA wish to continue with the Steering Committee 2) co-chairs, 1 other COA member, and 3 staff members). It was done this past FY on a trial basis and the COA needs to decide whether or not to continue with this. Comments: Elsie: feels COA & staff are working in unity, all have the same objectives in mind; it's an ideal situation. Hank: it functioned very well. Doris: helped for issues that arose between meetings. Maura: helped bring unity between staff & COA. Nancy: echoed everyone's thoughts and feelings. Nominating Committee for Secretary and Co-Chairs of COA: Elsie, Hank & Doris. They're to meet following COA meeting.

Community members present were introduced. Bert Finger: a friend of COA and a person who's able to get a lot of projects going. Rosemary Kofler: works at the Hostess Desk and is applying to the COA. Marge Babb: knows the community, knows people in Town, has been involved with the Senior Center as a friend and in many other roles, and much more. Tom Marshall: Bulletin reporter.

**Barry: New Design for Downtown Sidewalk Project.** The new design concept is making its way through Town Boards and Committees for review and comment. On 7/26 the Select Board will review and possibly have a decision to move ahead with construction.

New concept: Instead of pavers in the travel lane, there would be concrete walkways (same as on parking garage). The expansion joints would be on a diagonal with pavers, possibly granite as edging. The details will be worked out for each area. Medallions, accent pieces, with public art, information or nothing would be at the crosses of some of the diagonal joints.

The alley between Starbucks and Douglass Funeral Home will possibly be called "Pleasant Walk" as it leads to N. Pleasant St. This would probably be the 1<sup>st</sup> area to be done as the money to pay for this is associated with the parking garage and is apart from the money related to the TM warrant article. Additionally, it'd serve as an accessible walkway to N. Pleasant St until the Kellogg Ave sidewalk improvements are done.

Driveway curb cut at N. Pleasant St will remain and will be done with the same pattern (concrete walkway, paver edging, some granite edging). Some vehicles will be using the walkway to make deliveries. There'll be additional benches & lighting. Barry indicated the proposal is to have this project completed before Sept. 1 this year.

Comments on new design concept: Jean- a help to the many people who use Bangs, live at AW or Clark House. Doris-with trucks making deliveries, is it time limited? Barry indicated it's not. He'll check into making sure bicycles and skateboards are not allowed as it's a pedestrian walkway, not a public way. This would be maintained by the Town during the winter.

**The area by Bangs Ctr-Kellogg Ave-N Pleasant St:** The construction for this May begin in Sept. There seems to be consensus, not a decision, to have this area be a top priority. The original design had pavers for the walkway. The new design will be concrete with edging, expansion joints on an angle and pavers as edging. The slope up to Bangs would be regarded to meet accessibility requirements and the walkway would be concrete with expansion joints on an angle. There'd be a sidewalk along the western end of Ann Whalen that runs parallel to the parking spaces. Then a raised crosswalk across Kellogg Ave. Another raised crosswalk over Boltwood Ave and no plan for the sidewalk further up to N Pleasant St. The goal is to bring people across Kellogg Ave to the north

side of Kellogg, replace problematic paving with new concrete and possibly paver liners in front of the triple decker and the building behind Post Office. Raised sidewalk would calm traffic. There's the possibility of not having a sidewalk along the UU Society due to the trees.

Comments: Jean: design is workable; getting people out of Boltwood Walk safely; sidewalk and crosswalk would work well. Jean hoped the COA would approve the design. Robie: was there talk of working with designs Amherst College is using on College St? Could the Town use their design? Barry: this is very close to their design.

Differences are: Amherst College has lights (flashing) on the sides of crosswalks. Barry would like to see another raised crosswalk across Kellogg out of Rao's parking lot. The raised crosswalk from Bangs to Rao's needs to be rebuilt, but it hasn't been decided if it'll be redone with concrete or pavers. The paver surface does signal to drivers that it's a crosswalk. Nancy: will the trees along Ann Whalen be taken out? Barry: yes, they'll be removed and replaced. Nancy: Is in front of Bangs going to be redone? There are pavers upheaved due to tree roots. Barry: That'll be addressed to comply with accessible grade issues. Robie: He went out with a walker and feels these new designs are much easier for people who use w/c and walkers. Expansion joints are easier on w/c & walkers as wheels don't hit at same time so it's less bumpy. Concrete is more visually distinct from pavers. Pavers (edging) are more distinct. Also concrete is significantly less expensive than pavers. Robie feels it's a good plan, more frugal. A better product for a better price. Jean: A reminder that this is not just for downtown, but also for people who live downtown. An idea of a "signature" area on concrete before it dries. Barry said he didn't know of one, but he'd consider it.

A vote can't be taken, but members present were in agreement on the new design and would like to see it go forward.

### **Senior Trust**

- In the notebooks, the DEA Board Information section- page 3, 2nd paragraph re: membership of Trust overlapping with COA membership. Town Counsel looking into this; there might have been a ruling. Barry: It's a regulation that COA members cannot be involved with fundraising. Need to sort this out. Probably need to change practice of having membership the same. Nancy Maglione looked into this about four years ago with Senior Trust Atty. Deb Jankowski and concluded it's not a problem. Nancy P will look into it. Jean: Need to change membership. Jean suggested that perhaps former COA members could be members of the Senior Trust. Nancy spoke with MCOA Director, Dave Stevens, and he said there was a subsequent ruling allowing for some overlap, provided that a majority of Trust members are not COA members, but he doesn't have it in writing. That is how it is handled in Northampton. Since there isn't an August meeting, there's a longer period of time to clear this up. COA members are in agreement that they would like Doris to continue as Trust Treasurer as she has done an excellent job. Barry: The Senior Trust was established by the COA many years ago and signed off on by Toby Dakin, Town Counsel. Elsie: is the Senior Trust money a revolving fund? No. Is the van account a revolving fund? No. Nancy: COA members and staff need to read all the material in the notebook as changes will probably have to be made. Example: By-laws haven't been changed since inception in 1967. Barry: He did an analysis a few years ago & he'll get that info to Nancy as there are some conflicts. Nancy: a model of by-laws is in the notebook.
- Nancy: Need a \$105 check to cover scholarships. Elsie: is it possible to have Senior Trust Treasurer write checks for under \$200 without getting COA approval? Not presently. Doris: the authorization form needs to be revised.

### **Notebooks**

Robie: Great!! Really glad to see Citizens Guide to Drafting Legislation in notebook. Notebook is thoughtfully prepared and worth keeping it up.

Nancy: Great team effort with a lot of help from EOEA and Town Hall. It's laid out clearly. Please look at staff bios and job descriptions. Nancy encouraged COA members to write their bios to have included in notebook. There are two organizational flow charts: one for the State and one for Amherst. The Town one may need to be updated. Robie is not sure if it's being updated. Elsie suggested having minutes or any other papers going into notebook to have holes punched in them already. Nancy agreed to have that done.

### **Sub-Committee Descriptions**

Some are ad-hoc committees (nominating), others are on-going (transportation- not just our new van, but PVT buses, Reserve-A-Ride van & ADA paratransit van).

Robie: Select Board is in the process of considering establishment of Government Affairs Comm. Purpose would be for a group of citizens interested in state & federal legislation to follow it if it's of particular interest to Town (i.e. transportation funding, Town police to work with UMASS Police). Follow it on a day-to-day basis. He feels it'd be very beneficial to Town. Would like to get other Towns, cities to follow suit & be able to effect legislation. Robie would like to have COA members call their Select Board rep. to encourage the development of Government Affairs Comm. Also be great to have a COA member on the comm. Select Board meeting is 7/12 and Government Affairs Comm. is on agenda.

COA Funding Committee: Hank- they sent out a number of letters for van operation. So far a total of \$2465 has been donated. All this \$ goes into the Town acct. solely for the van. Public Works has agreed to be involved with van maintenance.

Transportation Committee: There's been one van trip using the new van. An Amherst police officer, with a CDL, volunteered to drive the van up to Deerfield Academy for a singing performance of a State Trooper.

Some technical things that need to happen for drivers of passenger vans: Drug/Alcohol Testing. We have to buy a \$300 policy and that would call for unscheduled testing of our drivers in larger pool of drivers in the area. The driver would be notified of the need for a drug test and then given a specific amount of time to have it done.

As of now, we have two drivers who've been interviewed and, pending receipt of all necessary documents, they are ready to be hired. Hopefully, everything will be in place within a month as there are 2 or 3 local trips where a van will be used in the upcoming newsletter. Nancy would like some trips to be very low cost or no cost during the year. Jean spoke of the comfort of the van both in seats and if using a wheelchair. She hopes people will volunteer ideas for trips to take, places to go.

### New Business

**Funding for Maura's Position:** After consultation with Barry, Nancy and Maura decided not to reapply for the congregate funding. The census at the Jean Elder and Tobin Congregate Houses has been very low for a number of years. There have been no new applications for at least 2 years and the Amherst Housing Authority has leased out 3 of the apartments to private, non-profit human service agencies for staffed/supervised apartments. **The Amherst Housing Authority does not consider the Jean Elder House congregate anymore.** The 5 people presently living there are completely independent and not receiving any services. At the site in Northampton, the Northampton Housing Authority has also leased the ground floor congregate apartment to a private/non-profit and there's one resident with no new applications or interest in 2 years. This single resident has a sister who is assisting him with grocery shopping and a neighbor who helps with rides. Nancy and Maura spoke at length and decided for these reasons, and ethical ones, we couldn't reapply.

**Funding for Karen's Position:** The \$14,700 EOE grant is intended for outreach. It'd be more appropriate for that \$ to go to Maura. The Human Rights piece of the pie is money presently coming to Karen even though she's not doing any work for Human Rights. Barry is working on how to deal with this.

**Use of FY05 Program Director's salary:** (Nancy's previous position, \$55,000)

Barry has agreed to the following:

- We'll receive a new copier (\$9,500) Supposed to arrive next Wed. This will replace the fax machine & computer printers. This will save much staff time running up and downstairs to other floors for copying.
- The \$2,000 cut to the Center Activities line item will be restored.
- Addition of \$1,000 to the Office Supplies line item.
- Barry will be taking at least \$10,000 to pay for the consultant for the Town programs in the Bangs.
- \$12,000 + still owed to John to pay for his vacation and comp time owed.
- Remaining monies--Barry is still sorting this out.

### Comments:

**Elsie** - The COA needs to know how much Town money was in John's, Barbara Slovin and Barbara Taylor, and Maureen's salaries. What is the total Town commitment designated to the COA and the Senior Center? Elsie feels COA members have to advocate for staff positions at the Senior Center. Go thru previous COA minutes to learn this information. Also ask Barry for what came out of Town Mtg re: salaries for staff at Senior Center.

**Robie** - What has the state done for funding Senior Centers, etc. Stan Rosenberg, Ellen Story would have that info.

**Nancy** - Spoke of increased job responsibilities of Senior Center staff with early retirements. Each staff person doing 2 jobs for this fiscal year.

**Consultant's Study:** On July 27, a meeting is scheduled with Barry, Human Services Committee Chairs, Senior Center staff and Anne Awad to brainstorm around the consultant's study and how it'll come together. and what the Senior Center priorities.

Robie - It is time to think about what the Senior Center needs to run well & offer what is needed to seniors? What are potential funding sources, present funding sources? Plan it out and write it down.

#### **Annual Report**

The Annual Report is due September 3rd. Anyone who has info needs to get it to Nancy or Jean. A memo went out to all COA members where the report areas were identified. Liz and Elsie- info concerning HVES & meetings they attended there. Funding Comm, Wellness Comm, as well as other programs and services offered will all need to get info/stats to Nancy. Nancy would like it together by mid-August to get in.

**Nursing Center** - This will come before COA members soon. Barry is leaning toward having our nurse supervised by the Health Dept. This will be discussed at the September meeting.

#### **Next meeting is September 9th, at 9:00 AM.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:59 AM.